

**MINUTES of a MEETING of ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 in the Council Chamber, 39 Penwinnick Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5DR at 6.05pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Brown, Bull, Clemo, Cohen, Fox, French, George, Guest, Hamilton, Lanxon, Nott, Stephens, Styles and Thompson.

**In attendance:** David Pooley (Town Clerk), Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk), Bill McCardle (Regeneration Officer).

**Also in attendance:** Mike Hawes (Mei Loci)

**C/22/55) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Double, Pearce, Rowse and Young.

**C/22/56) Declarations of interests and gifts or hospitality received**

Councillor French declared an interest in the agenda item relating to St Austell BID.

**C/22/57) Dispensations**

There were no requests for a dispensation.

**C/22/58) Minutes of Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Arising from a question, the Clerk confirmed that he recalled Mr Reader advising Members that the Town Council and the public would be consulted when a planning application comes forward for the demolition of the offices at Penwinnick Road. He added that it has now come to light that Mr Reader was unaware at the time of the Town Council meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 that the planning process had started.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

*\*\*Councillor Guest apologised for his late arrival\*\**

**C/22/59) Matters to Note**

The Clerk advised that he had nothing to add.

**C/22/60) Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor referred Members to the list of engagements circulated previously, her planned Proms event flier and plans for a collection at Tesco for St John's Ambulance.

**C/22/61) Public Participation**

The Mayor agreed that Mr Lovatt and Mrs Miller could speak at agenda item 10.

**C/22/62) Members' Questions**

There were no questions from Members.

*\*\* Councillor Stephens joined the meeting \*\**

### **C/22/63) Town Centre Revitalisation Project**

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership had recently shown their support for the projects identified by Mei Loci and provided a steer on the priorities. He explained that in order to progress to a comprehensive consultation with business and the public he would like the Town Council to also review the projects/priorities proposed with a view to supporting the Partnership's suggestions.

Mr Hawes outlined 24 Projects as listed in a report circulated at the meeting and asked for Members' views. During discussion the following issues/comments were raised:

- The historic value of the General Wolfe building
- The problems with the traffic flows on the junction nearby and the dangerous corner next to the General Wolfe building
- The importance of the shop mobility scheme
- The potential to develop the old car park at Vicarage Place and the need for an adaptable all year round facility
- The benefits and dis-benefits of student accommodation
- Concerns about shared pedestrian/vehicular surfaces
- The need to improve cycling routes through the town centre
- The need to feel safe in the town centre through improved lighting and traffic calming
- ASB hotspots in the town centre including close to the Holy Trinity Church
- The location of the STAK community kitchen
- The need to consider prevailing winds if buildings are removed
- Concern that some businesses in the town centre are not maintaining their buildings
- The benefits and reservations regarding the use of cladding
- The need for realistic estimated costs with sufficient provisions for inflation and unforeseen expenses
- Concern with regard to the Government funding that will be available

Mr Hawes thanked Members for the feedback and confirmed that the comments received would be taken into account.

It was **RESOLVED** to endorse the list of projects identified and approve the further development of the ideas, taking into account the comments made by Members, to include a comprehensive cost plan and cost benefit analysis to allow the prioritisation and planning of project delivery assuming different levels of Government funding.

*\*\* Councillor French left the meeting for the following item \*\**

### **C/22/64) St Austell BID**

The Clerk advised that the St Austell Business Improvement District was due to be the subject of a vote to determine whether it should continue for a further 5 years. He stressed the importance of the BID to the vitality of the town centre and the need to help ensure a successful renewal process.

Mr Lovatt and Mrs Miller thanked the Town Council for their support and explained that they would not be able to put on such a comprehensive display of Christmas

lights or the number of hours for security patrols without the Town Council's support and financial assistance.

Members discussed the merits of providing Christmas lights in the town centre, the excellent planting schemes and the success of the security patrols working in conjunction with the Police and other agencies and initiatives such as the CCTV, radio and DISC systems.

It was **RESOLVED** to express support for the renewal of the BID and to approve in principle the continuance of funding streams for the BID throughout another 5 year term.

*\*\* Councillor French returned to the meeting \*\**

### **C/22/65) Grounds Maintenance Service**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the Operations Manager was unable to attend the meeting. She introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- Poltair Park safety surfacing
- Poltair café reconfiguration and trading
- Staff movements and apprentices trained
- The 7<sup>th</sup> grass cut of the year was underway
- The pending review of the grass cutting policy
- The review of the service level agreement with Cornwall Council.

She explained that climate change was embedded in the work of the grounds maintenance team and this included tree planting, recycled furniture, wild-flower areas and wilding, re-cycling of plants and growing of plants from seed.

She advised that over 500 trees had been planted and counted towards the Forest for Cornwall initiative, that the Polytunnel and tree nursery area were being made good use of and the service was performing well and earning many plaudits from the public.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report/update.

### **C/22/66) Members appointed to outside bodies update reports**

Councillor Thompson advised that he had been to a planning partnership meeting and received training on biodiversity targets for new developments.

### **C/22/67) Cornwall Councillor update reports**

Members noted the written reports received from Councillors Double, Guest and Rowse.

Arising from questions, the Clerk advised that he was unaware of any additional funding for longer library opening hours and that Fore Street is regularly swept and litter picked under the Biffa contract. He added that the requirement to regularly wash St Austell town centre was deleted from the Biffa contract by Cornwall Council a few years ago and that the Boots steps are privately owned.

Arising from a question, Councillor Guest confirmed that the Community Networks are being reviewed and will update the Town Council as and when firm proposals are worked up.

## **C/22/68) Planning and Regeneration Committee**

Members discussed the latest position with regard to the Penwinnick Road office demolition and expressed their continued concern with regard to the trees on the site and the lack of consultation with the Town Council, local residents and Pondhu School.

In his absence, Councillors Bull and Brown thanked Councillor Rowse for his comprehensive report regarding Penwinnick Road and the actions requested therein.

Members felt strongly that the Cornwall Councillors should join forces and lobby for a delay to the demolition to allow a proper consultation process to take place. Members also expressed strong concern that the trees on the site are not protected and felt that a Tree Preservation Order should be applied for.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should write in the strongest terms to the Chief Executive of Cornwall Council expressing the Town Council's concerns with regard to the process adopted for the demolition and re-development of the Penwinnick Road site and request a delay to the demolition to permit proper consultation with the Town Council, local residents and Pondhu School.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Clerk should apply for a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect the mature trees on the Penwinnick Road site not currently covered by a TPO.

Councillor Brown asked that minute P/22/56 be amended as follows:

### **P/22/56) Cornwall Council Highways Scheme**

*Members noted the list of highways schemes and expressed a view that they are not representative of what the public would like to see, and an example was given of a scheme that had been implemented and subsequently reversed due to inadequate consultation with local residents and the scheme being operationally impractical.*

*Members felt that they needed more information and guidance on the highways schemes and suggested that in future an update report should be placed on every **Planning and Regeneration Committee** agenda and the Cornwall Councillors invited to update Members on their schemes.*

*It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should:*

- (i) Make contact with the Highways Officers to ascertain more information about the various highways schemes, their funding and how their progress can be communicated to the Town Council;*
- (ii) Invite the Cornwall Councillors to regularly update the Town Council on their schemes put forward for implementation **and they be invited to a future meeting of the Planning and Regeneration Committee to discuss these.***

It was **RESOLVED** to approve these amendments and note the minutes of the Planning and Regeneration Committee meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022.

## **C/22/69) Schedule of Payments**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Payments for the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022 totalling £53,817.25 be approved.

**C/22/70) Dates of Meetings**

It was noted that the next Town Council meetings are due to take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.02pm.